PM's *Eight All-Time Great* CLASSIC CARS

By Jim Whipple

STUTZ, MARMON, PACKARD, Pierce-Arrow, Duesenberg, Chrysler Imperial, Lincoln, Cord. These were America's great cars. If you were around at the time, there is no need to tell you that they were classics. You know it. Conceived in a time of giants, they were giants themselves. They were as much products of the Roaring Twenties as the bootlegger or the flapper, although they did not reach their peak until after the ball was over, during the gloomy depression years of 1930, '31 and '32.

Born of the unlimited optimism and soaring imaginations of the Jazz Age, the cars themselves were not jazzy. They wore no useless adornment; no fins or froth of chrome. Even the external exhaust pipes of the mighty Duesenberg SJ were functional under their shiny covers.

This refreshingly direct approach to styling was a result of a blissful, and too short-lived, union between the engineers who put together the basic ingredients of comfortable, powerful transportation and the designers who desired only to package it neatly and efficiently. For example, the "block-long" hood of the typical classic was no pretentious affectation; it was fully tenanted with the lengthy cylinder block of a big-bored straight eight or the incredible mass of a gleaming V-16.

Another reason for the tasteful elegance and legendary quality of the classics was the example of Europe. For, if there was ever anything that the shirt-sleeved moguls of the brash U.S. auto industry wanted, it was to produce motor cars equal to or better than the magnificent offerings of Rolls Royce, Bentley, Mercedes Benz or Hispano Suiza.

To achieve this goal, the finest metal, the thickest cushions, the softest leathers and the shiniest paints were worked with lavish care by such master coachbuilders as LeBaron, into bodies of elegant simplicity. In turn these were placed upon chassis embodying the most enduring construction and powerful performance that the engineering talents of the time could produce.

The final proof of greatness of these classics lies in the measure of their value; the few examples that have not suffered time and the wrecker's torch are worth more now than when they were new. And who can put a price on nostalgia?

Paintings by Paul Hamlin

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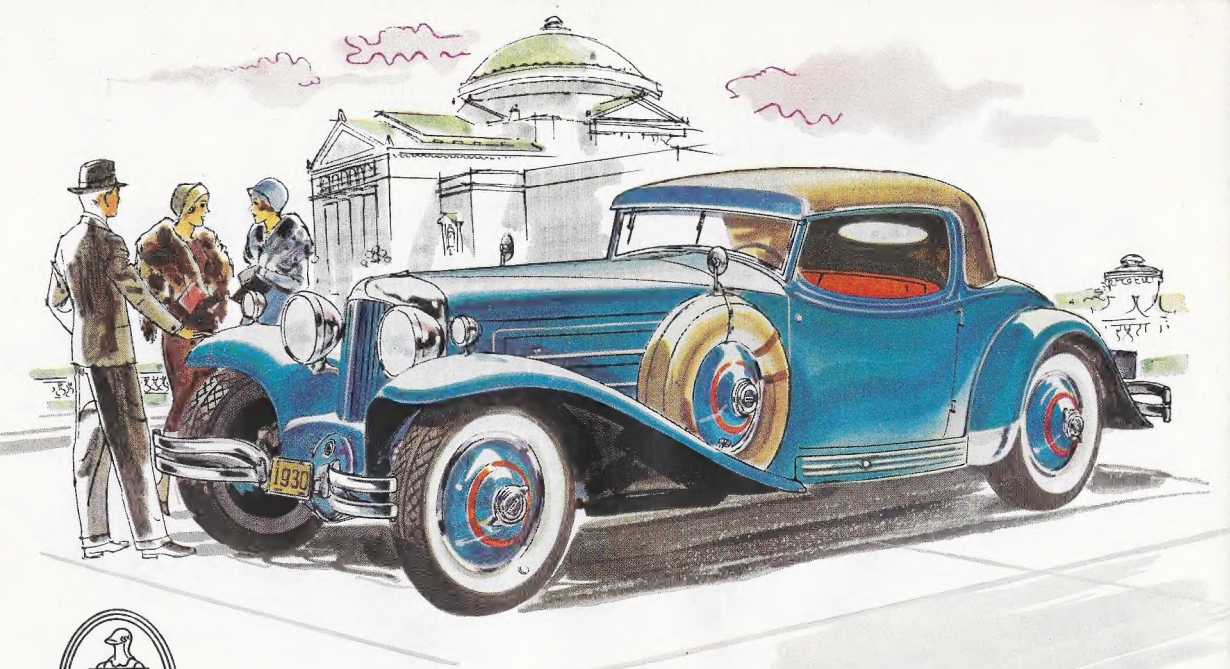
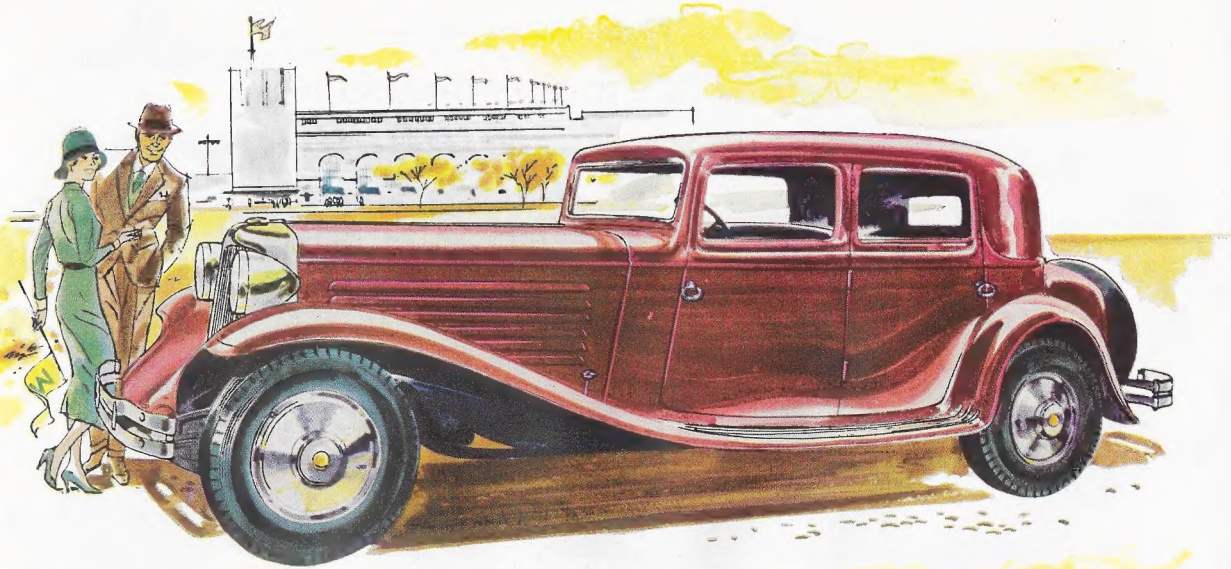
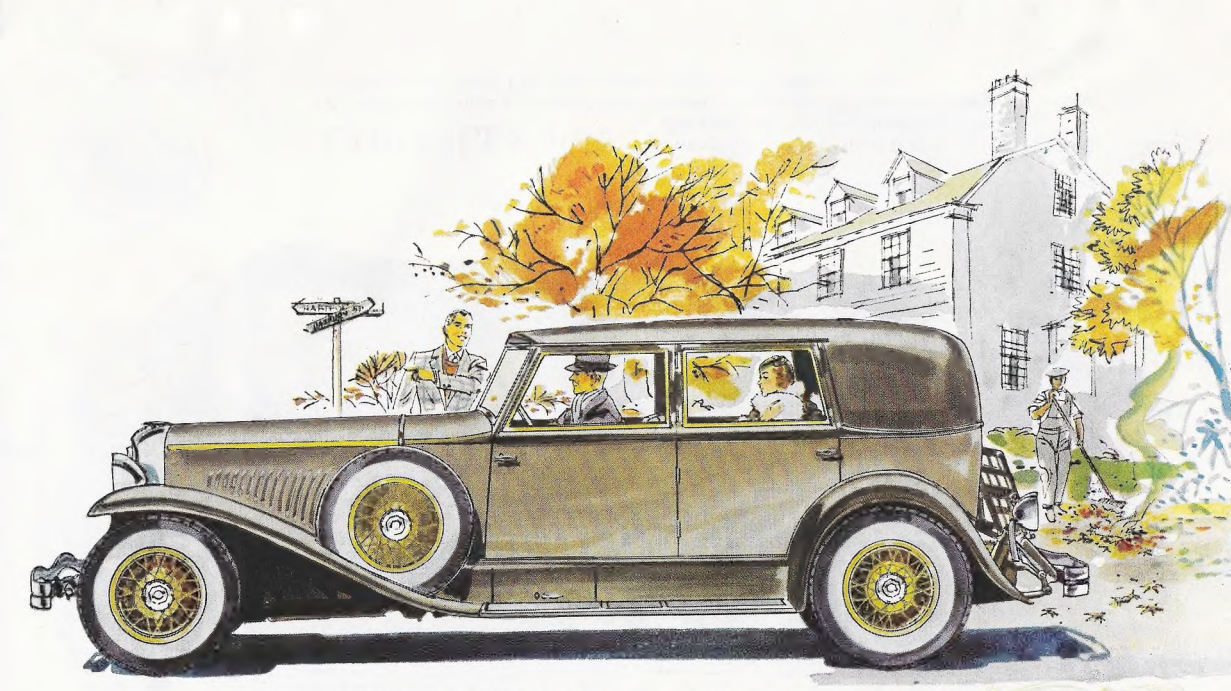


CORD 1930 *Three was a cozy crowd indeed in this Cord L-29 coupe. Its L-head Lycoming straight eight of 125 horsepower was reversed to permit forward placement of transmission and the front drive. Body was designed by Count Alexis de Sakhnoffsky.*

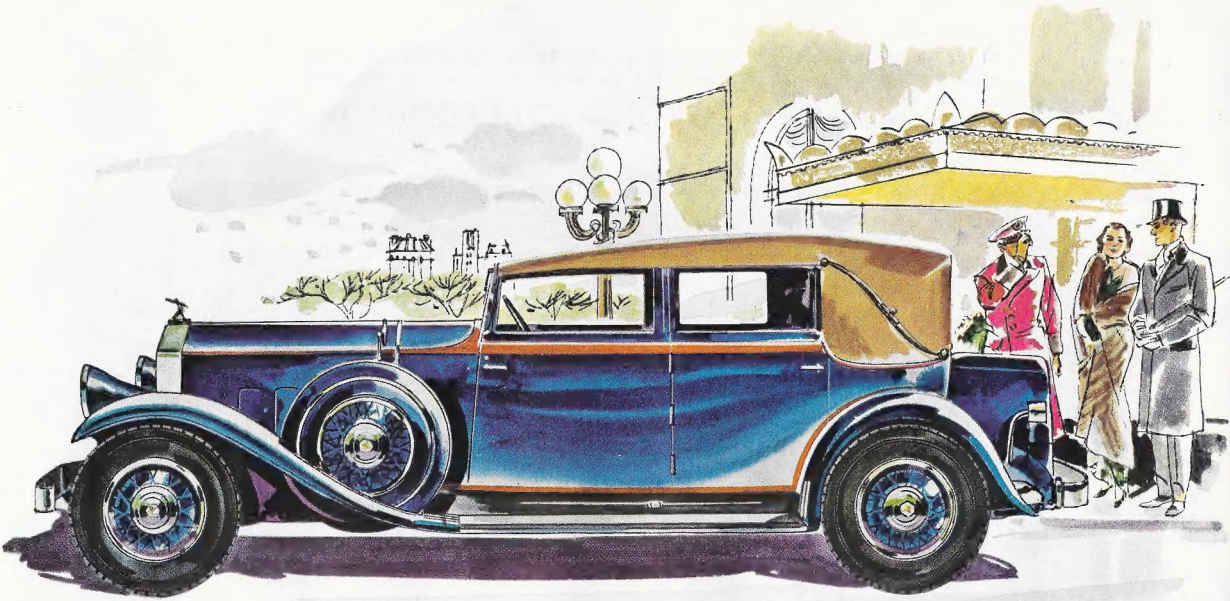


CHRYSLER 1931 *You were ahead of the crowd if you drove to the game in this low-slung Imperial Eight formal sedan by Ambi-Budd Presswerk of Berlin, German subsidiary of Edward G. Budd Co. The L-head engine developed 135 b.h.p.*



DUESENBERG 1931

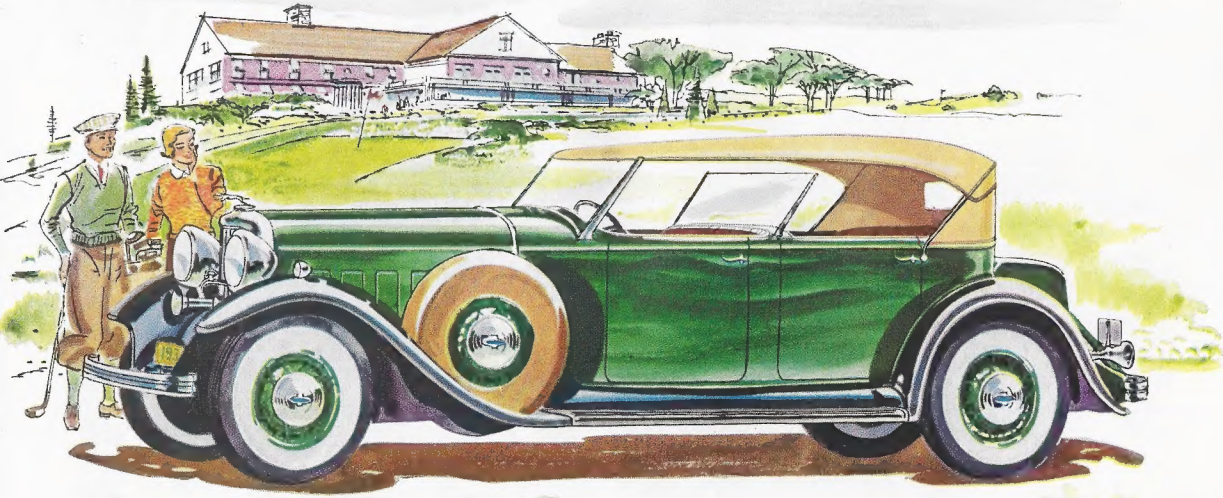
Prestige and power were wrapped up in this formal sedan built by Judkins. The "Duese" was the most powerful car in America at the time with its twin-overhead cam straight eight of 265 horsepower.



PIERCE 8

PIERCE ARROW 1931

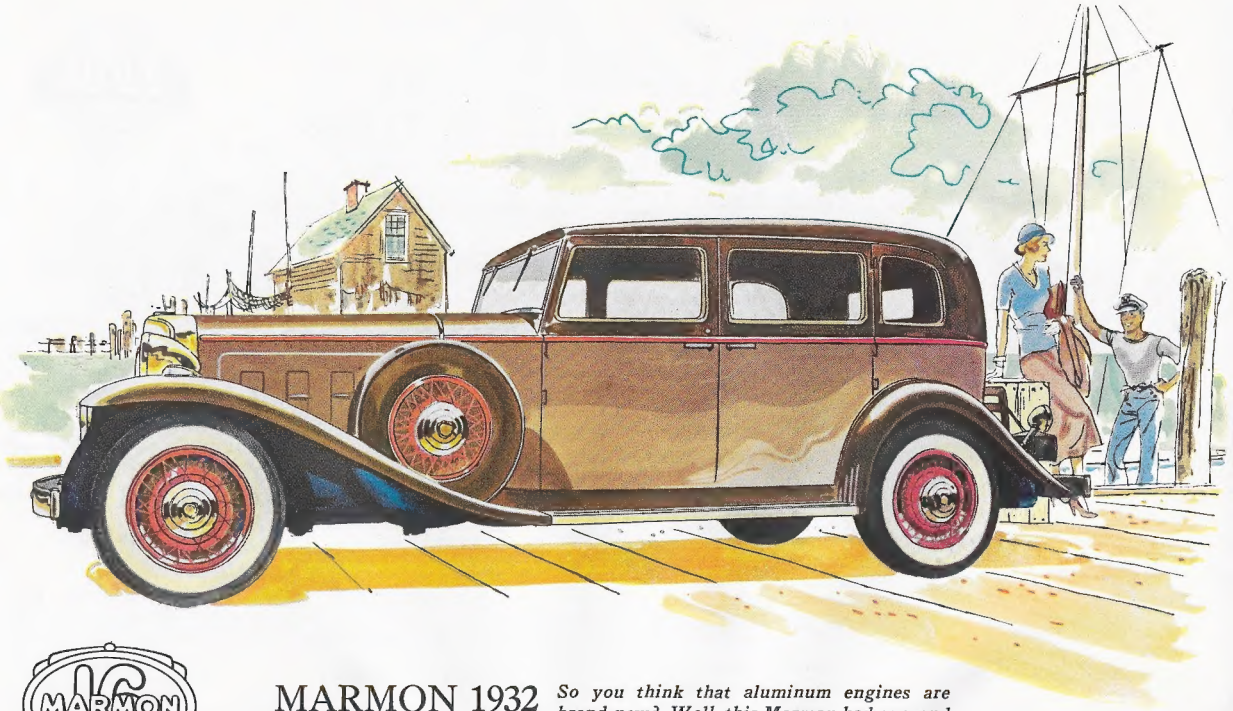
You'd be perfectly at home on Fifth Avenue in this elegant 147-inch-wheelbase convertible sedan by LeBaron. Its engine was an L-head straight eight of 385 cubic inches developing 132 horsepower.



LINCOLN

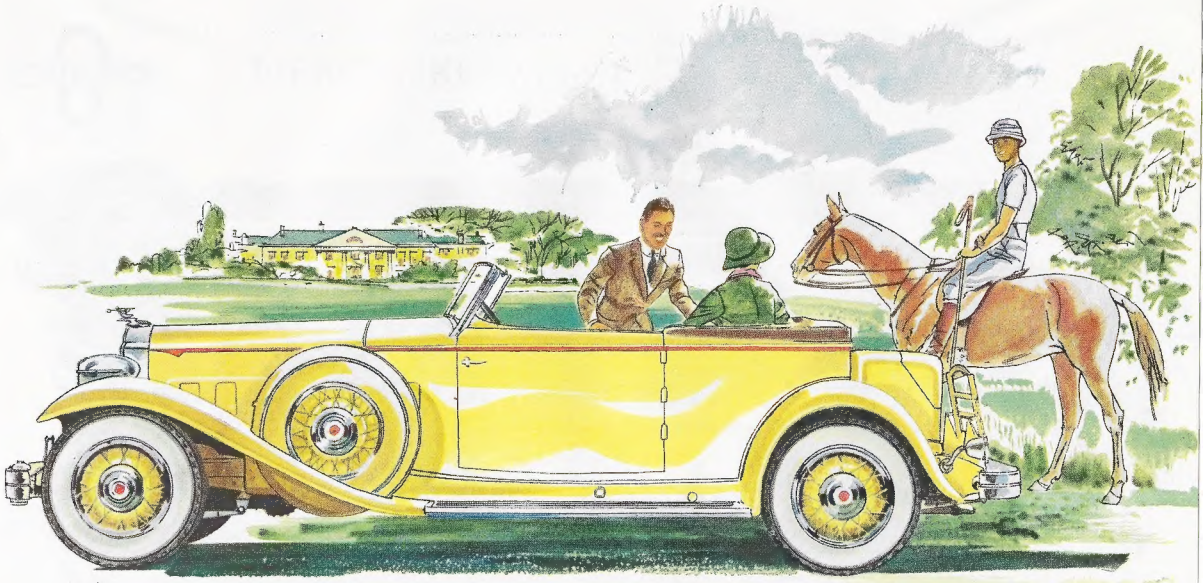
LINCOLN 1932

Rolling up to the country club was a breeze in this graceful dual-cowl phaeton by Brunn. The Lincoln's big V-8 engine had a bore and stroke of 3½ x 5 inches, developed its 120 horsepower at a relatively slow speed of 2900 r.p.m.



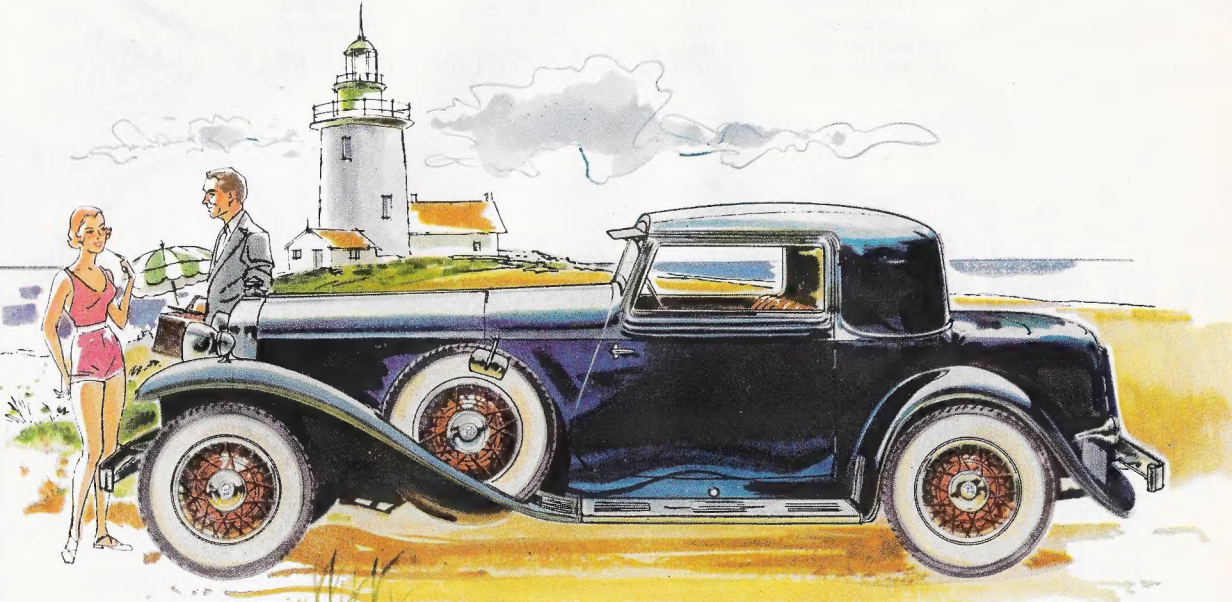
MARMON 1932

So you think that aluminum engines are brand-new? Well, this Marmon had one, and an overhead-valve 16-cylinder 200-horsepower job at that. The car set a 24-hour speed record of 76.4 miles-per-hour that remained unbroken until 1953.



PACKARD 1932

Smartest car at the polo field, with its rakish, sloped "Vee" windshield, was this convertible by Waterhouse. It had an "X" frame, two-piece driveshaft, and a central lubrication system. Its big L-head straight eight put out 135 b.h.p.



STUTZ 1932 *No suave, young bachelor's life was complete without this Stutz coupe. Custom body by Waterhouse on DV 32, 134½-inch wheelbase chassis. Engine—a 322-cubic-inch straight eight with twin overhead cams, four valves per cylinder and 161 b.h.p.*

THE CAR THAT MADE STUTZ GOOD IN A DAY

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